[Mr. G. B. E. Truscott.]

Mr. Thomas referred to the bridge at Palai. An estimate has been prepared for rebuilding that bridge. The estimate amounts to Rs. 2,22,000 and I am afraid it has to wait execution for want of funds.

He also referred to the fact that Government schools were being held in rented buildings. This is a matter with which the department is not directly concerned. But I must say that it would involve very heavy expense if we have to build new buildings everywhere to take the place of rented buildings. It is a matter concerning some other department and not to the P. W. Department.

Mr. R. V. Thomas (*Thodupuzha* cum *Minachil*): I did not mean that the P. W. D. must construct buildings for the housing of schools. I have no objection in housing them in rented buildings. I pointed out that fact to show that it is all the more desirable if Government spends some money for this bridge which is very necessary.

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott: I am sorry I did not understand the honourable member's point; but a sum of Rs. 2,20,000 is rather too big for the construction of this bridge to be considered at present.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair: May I know what has become of the Vellanad-Aruvikara road?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott: I am afraid I cannot refer to any particular road now as I have not the information with me. My time is very limited.

There was one reference to Thengapattanam road.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair: May I know why the Chief Engineer is not going to answer my question?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott: I cannot answer the question as I am not now in possession of facts regarding the road that the honourable member refers to.

President: Order, order. For the purpose of future guidance, and in order to avoid contingencies like the one now happening, I would suggest that, even though under the Rules appertaining to the State Council, cut motions cannot be brought forward in the same manner as elsewhere, some kind of indication may be given to the Secretaty as to what points honourable members wish to speak about, so that Government members may be prepared to answer those points and so as to obviate this kind of discontent that a particular point which one honourable member has very much at heart has been missed by Government.

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Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair: I have already sent in an interpellation regarding this road which has been admitted.

President: The fact whether an interpellation is admitted or not does not arise. I am referring to the budget procedure.

I will give you four minutes more due to my interruption.

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott: I have never refused to answer any question at any time if I have the information or material at hand to do so, but I really cannot remember the road that the honourable member has referred to. When the interpellation comes I shall be only too glad to give what information I am able.

Mr. Kadir Bhoy urged the need for a Pier at Quilon. That is being considered. I have submitted a report to Government regarding its construction and it is engaging the consideration of Government.

Mr. Korah referred to the need of a T. B. at Changanacherry. An estimate of Rs. 11,700 has been sanctioned for the construction of another T. B. in the place of the old one, but is awaiting funds for its construction.

Another honourable member referred to the construction of a canal from Alleppey to Changanacherry. It was started, but as the land-owners refused to give up their lands, Government decided they would not proceed with the work. An alternative of a combined canal and road has been decided on, but I cannot say when that is likely to be started as the amount of money involved is considerable.

I am afraid that time does not permit me to refer to the other points mentioned by the various honourable members, but their remarks will be noted. But before concluding I must say that I deprecate the personal attacks made on me by the honourable members of this House who saw fit to do so.

The demand was put to vote and carried. The grant was made.

DEMAND V—ELECTRICITY AND TELEPHONE.

Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon (*Electrical Engineer*): Sir, I move for a grant of Rs. 32,11,054 under Demand V—Electricity and Telephone.

Mr. Ananthasiva Aiyar: Sir, I oppose the demand. The main item of expenditure in the operations of paddy cultivation in Kuttanad is the pumping out of water from the fields. This is being done now by means of pumps worked with mechanical power. The average cost of pumping out water ranges from 1 to 1½ Rs. in kayal reclamations and 6 to 8 as. on karapadoms. Considering

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[Mr. Ananthasiva Aiyar.]

the outturn that the people are getting from these lands I must say that the amount that they are now spending for the purpose of pumping out water is absolutely out of proportion to the yield they get from the land. The ryots are consoling themselves that they will be able to have the work of pumping done much cheaper when the Pallivasal Hydro-Electric Project begins operation. So they are anxiously waiting for the current from the Pallivasal scheme. When the lines began to be constructed it was said that the line was to pass through the kayal area: That is, that the line between Kottayam and Alleppey was to pass from Pallom to Alleppey through the Vembanad Reclamation area. Now we find absolutely no work in that direction and the line has been diverted from Pallom through Mavelikara, Tiruvalla and so on. I would like to know from the Electrical Engineer whether he has a scheme in mind to see that we are served with the current, and whether they are going to construct a line through the Vembanad Reclamation area so that we may get the advantage of the scheme. Not only that, on the expectation that we would be getting power for utilising for this purpose, we are not going in for the purchasing of new engines for pumping out water. If the department are not going to give us power, we have to go in for crude oil engines for this purpose.

Sir; I have been reading from the Hindu or some other paper very lately about the wonderful help that electric power would give to cultivators in the matter of eradicating pests and other evils which are doing great havoc to the paddy cultivators. We tried ever so many experiments as suggested by the Agricultural Department. I myself had a very bad experience last year by adhering to the advice given by the Agricultural Department in this matter and I had to loose crops which stood on my 25 acres of land. There was pest in the crop. The experts advised me to use paris green to destroy the pests. I obeyed them and the result was that I had to lose very much. We are very anxious that the Electrical Department would do something in this matter of eradicating pests from the paddy lands. With these words I oppose the demand.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair : Sir, I oppose the demand. In doing so, I wish to draw the attention of the Electrical Engineer to certain important points relating to the working of the department. I am specially referring, Sir, to the electric supply to the town of Trivandrum. The Administration Report for 1112 would show that in spite of the reduction of the cost per unit of electricity from 6 as. to 5 as. the income of the department has considerably increased. Sir, with your permission

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I may read a relevant portion from the proceedings of the Government on the Administration Report of the Department for 111½. It reads thus :—

> "It is noteworthy that in spite of the reduction of the tariffs from 6 as. to 5 as. a unit for domestic consumers, the revenue showed a remarkable increase."

Certainly, Sir, the surplus was due to the increase in the number of consumers as a result of the reduction in the tariff per unit of the current. To the best of any information I find that the generating cost per unit of electricity is 1 anna. Even that one anna may be reduced further since we make so much provision for depreciation charges. However, let us assume it is one anna. Then I ask, Sir, is not 5 as. per unit, an exorbitant rate so far as the consumers are concerned. Are there not other States which give electricity at lesser rates? If the department will still reduce their tariff rates per unit to 4 as. or 3 as. they could get more consumers and thereby increase the revenue to a considerable extent. That is one of the important points which I should like to lay stress for the information of the Electrical Engineer.

Then, Sir, I have to make a few observations in the matter of providing street lights in the town of Trivandrum. Of course nobody would deny that the metropolis needs beautifying. But if the Electrical Department so think they can improve the present system of lighting to the better advantage of the people and the town as well without incurring additional expenses. I note, Sir, that there are about 36 miles of supply line for the town of Trivandrum. In spite of this 36 miles of supply line, we find that a number of streets are lighted with an unnecessary number of light points. They seem to crowd in certain places while some other roads are not provided with any light at all. Therefore if the distribution of lights were discriminately done, of course keeping in view the amenities of the public, it would have been more beneficial to the people as well as to the town itself. Now, Sir, there are certain places where certain houses do require electric connection. For this, posts have to be supplied by the department on the road. Nevertheless, the department is not providing those roads with lights. I know there are certain places in the town itself, for example Vanchiyoor, Kunnukuzhi, Kannanmoola, where there are posts only and no lights. In other places like Thaikad and Vazhuthakad, lights are provided very lavishly in all the posts which are placed unnecessarily near each other. I urge this fact for the attention of the department so that all the residents of Trivandrum might enjoy the benefits that are sought to be given by the department.

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[Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair.]

Sir, a more discriminatory correspondence with the local Municipality regarding the supply of lights should engage the attention of the department in the matter of giving lights to the whole town of Trivandrum without any additional cost. I would invite the attention of the Electrical Engineer to another thing also. That is regarding service connection. I understand that for a distance of 50 ft. the service connection is given free For the remaining distance if it is more than 50 ft. the consumer has to give ready cash Now ordinarily for service connections, we require an investment of about Rs. 200, at any rate, not less than Rs. 200. And there might be a number of persons who would require service connections but who are not able to pay the amount in a lump sum. If the department allows payment by instalments, in the case of such persons it will be more advantageous to the consumer and the department will have a larger number of consumers as well.

Sir, I have to make an observation on one other point. For connection charges, the department demands 5 Rs. But in other parts of India the connection charges are much less. The Electrical Department demand 5 Rs. for testing also. Supposing there is a disorder which might be repaired by taking a bulb and replacing it ; it is no disorder at all, but a layman does not know how to take off and replace a bulb. Supposing there is such a demand and you call for the help of a man from the department for the purpose of taking off the bulb and replacing it, then you are required to pay Rs. 5 as testing fees. This is certainly hard.

The House adjourned for lunch at 1 p. m. and reassembled at 2 p. m.

Sir, I was pointing out the necessity of providing more lights in the Town of Trivandrum. I suggested a method by which more lights could be provided without incurring any additional expenditure. I was at the point of stating that the charge that was levied by the Department for testing is Rs. 5 though practically not much work is to be done by way of examining or testing the light that is in disorder. That difficulty could be obviated if the Department could insist on making periodical examinations free of charge. Of course, they could do it once in six months or once in an year. If you insist on the charge of Rs. 5 being the fee for testing there will be the possibility of many consumers not letting the Department know of any disorder that may exist for fear of giving Rs. 5. Consequently, the Electric Installation running into disorder continues and this might lead to very serious accidents and dangers.

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Another suggestion that I would offer to the Department is the abolition of the charge of Re. 1 that is now being levied by way of fuse fee. There also, if a wire happens to go out of order, it does not need any additional expenditure. It requires only a replacement of the wire. Nevertheless, the Department levies a rupee from the private consumers with the result that the private consumers are often tempted to seek the aid of private electricians in spite of the fact that it may be eventually penal. If this fusement fees is also reduced I would assert that the Department would be able to realise greater revenue.

Sir, another very important point I would bring to the attention of the Government, as also that of the Electrical Engineer, is the insistence by the Electrical Department on the deposit of Rs. 10 by every consumer. Now an explanation may be given by the Electrical Engineer saying that Rs. 10 is a sort of deposit so that the consumer may not make a default. That difficulty could be obviated by giving connections for all buildings for which the owners are the applicants without deposits. At present the system is that, irrespective of the fact whether the applicant is a tenant or owner, if he makes a deposit of Rs. 10 the building is electrified. The fact of his being a tenant or the owner of the House is not considered. If the Department would insist that the owner has to make the application they could do away with this deposit of Rs 10. Supposing any default or dues accrue to the Government they could recover it under the Revenue Recovery Regulation.

Mr. K. R. Elankath: In that case supposing a house owner has made some other charge leviable on the house, how could it be realised by the Department ?

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair: I suppose my honourable friend knows that Government dues must have a first charge. The owner of the building has to undertake that the connection may be given. Or the owner may be asked to give an undertaking that the properties are not encumbered.

President: Honourable member has three minutes more.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair: Yes. If he gives that undertaking and if he is incorrect there he will be subjected to criminal action. If recourse will be had to that method then connection could be given to the private owners and default of payment could be avoided.

Sir, the system of depositing Rs. 10 results in an amount of Rs. 24,000 being given to Government by private consumers. It am told that this Rs. 24,000 is deposited by the Electrical Department in Government without any interest. The Electrical Department also does not get any interest. The consumers who deposit also do not get any interest. So from the financial point of view also this is dterimental.

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[Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair.]

A word about which I should like to have some explanation from the Electrical Engineer. I was told last year, when I questioned—when the Administration Report of the Department for the last year was given—that one major Howard and Sgr. Marcelo inspected the Pallivasal Hydro-Electric Scheme and gave their opinion. I asked the Electrical Engineer and he said that some sort of remuneration was given to them. It is my information that the inspection was made before the discovery of some defects. What was the remuneration given to them and what was the amount paid to the Tunnel Engineer? I am not saying anything about the merits of these matters; they are *sub judice*. I understand that there is an inordinate delay in the enquiry and that a large number of files in the Chief Engineer's office that require prompt attention are pending disposal because these files are elsewhere.

President What is it? The honourable member will kindly repeat.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair: As a result of the enquiry that has been lodged against the Russian Engineer a number of files that require prompt attention at the hands of the Chief Engineer and the Engineering Department are now pending elsewhere.

President: Order, order. Will the Chief Engineer enlighten the house as to whether this is a fact and if so how that information has leaked out?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott: I don't know how this information has leaked out. The honourable member has stated that certain files have been sent to the Chief Secretary from my office, but how he obtained this information I have no idea.

President: I hope the Chief Engineer will take very prompt action against those who are responsible for this.

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott: Yes. Now it has been brought to my notice that some information has leaked out but the fault may not lie in my office. But I will certainly do my best to find out if anyone in my office is guilty.

President: I hope the Chief Engineer will take prompt action in this matter.

I do not blame the honourable member at all because it is open to the honourable members of the Legislature to obtain information from any source and to impart the information on the floor of this House subject to the Rules of the debate. It is absolutely clear that if as stated by the honourable member certain files have gone from the Chief Engineer's office or any other office to the

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gentleman who is making the enquiry and on that ground certain files are delayed, those are matters entirely between the Government Department and the enquiring officer. It must be distinctly understood that Government business would be impossible if such information were to come out. I hope the honourable members of the Legislature, who are co-operating with the Government will be the first to realise that if this kind of thing takes place it is quite easy to imagine many other things taking place. For instance it will be mentioned here that a certain Assistant Secretary noted upon a file in a certain way and that the Chief Secretary sent it back with another note, and so on and there is no knowing where it will stop. Therefore I trust the official members will see to it that no room is given for such questions or information being debated on the floor of the House.

Mr. Kottur Kunjukrishna Pillai: I wish to draw the pointed attention of this House and the Electrical Engineer to one matter only. Sir, some time ago, the Electrical Engineer came forward with a supplementary demand to train up one of his assistants in Hydro-Electric work. He stated at that time that it was absolutely necessary, and that the demand could not wait till the usual budget session because it was an urgent matter. That supplementary demand, I understand, Sir, was debated upon and in spite of the opposition to the demand being granted on account of the want of urgency in the matter, the Electrical Engineer insisted on saying that the training is absolutely necessary and that it could not wait. He stated that he will not be able to discharge the work without such a trained man and therefore the demand was granted by the majority of the House.

Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon: Sir, I would correct the honourable member. I think it was not made during the supplementary grant. The demand was made during the budget session.

Mr. Kottur Kunjukrishna Pillai: Sir, I am not sure whether it was during the regular budget session or not. So far as I can recollect I think it was during the supplementary grant. I was referring to Mr. P. Joseph John who was to have been ..... I think the Electrical Engineer will refer to that again, because I took part in that demand and opposed it on the specific ground that there was no urgency to bring that as a supplementary grant. Any way, I am not in a position to lay my finger on that just now. I definitely remember that it was during the supplementary demand that this question was brought up. Any way, I now find that that amount has not been utilised and that officer has not gone for training. When Departmental Heads put forward demands for particular items, I think they will be considering the necessity of such

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[Mr. Kottur Kunjukrishna Pillai.]

demands and if there is no absolute necessity they will not put it on for the consideration of the House and obtain a decision. Having obtained a decision without paying much attention to that the whole matter should not be dropped. That is not quite proper or fair to the House. Is it the contention or will it be the contention of the Chief Engineer that that training was found to be unnecessary after some time, or is it the contention of the Chief Engineer that he is not going to be put on the Hydro Electric works and that he will be put in charge of the thermal-stations only ?

Or, has he, after consideration, come to the conclusion that it is not necessary to train him up ? Sir, it is not my concern just now whether that officer is trained or not. What I want to point out is that departmental heads should not be allowed to come forward with demands before they investigate into the matter thoroughly and are absolutely satisfied that there is real necessity for the demand. Then only should they be allowed to come forward to the Legislature and get its decision on the matter. That is a matter which I should like the Electrical Chief Engineer and the Government to bear in mind.

Another point which has been debated upon in this House and elsewhere is with regard to what is called the high rate charged for electricity in Quilon and Trivandrum, and the huge profits that the Department is making. I for one do not see any justification for that complaint. On the one hand hon'ble members representing rural constituencies come forward and say that large sums of money are being spent in towns while the rural parts are not given even their necessities. That being so, I do not see how it can be legitimately complained that the Government are getting sufficient remuneration for the amenities that they supply to the towns. If the Government are making large profits it is with a view to see that such schemes can be extended and improved by the money saved. Those who are enjoying amenities must legitimately be prepared to pay for it ; and it is not fair to ask the rural tax-payer to contribute to any extent to such amenities which he is not enjoying. Therefore I am against the complaint made by some honourable members against the department making sufficiently good profit on the electric supply service in towns.

With regard to the Pallivasal Hydro-Electric works, it is very gratifying to find that the work will come into force by next year, and I hope that there will be no unforeseen difficulty ; because, I may say that the whole country is watching the successful fruition of this work with very great concern. I hope the Electrical Chief Engineer will assure us that there will be no avoidable delay in the successful working of this great project on which the people hope so much.

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President : Honourable members will notice that there are only 25 minutes more for this Demand. Therefore, I shall give 5 minutes each for two honourable members.

Mr. K. R. Elankath : I wish to make a few observations in supporting this Demand. The Electrical Chief Engineer will admit that, in propotion to the increase of demand and supply, the cost will be reduced. That is a position which cannot but be accepted, and it is on that basis that we expect greater increase in our receipts under Electricity. Sir, the Budget provides for an additional set of generators. As regards the reduction of rates, it is my considered view that abnormal reduction, all on a sudden to the actual working charges cannot be commended ; because, this is both a utilitarian as well as a commercial concern to the Government. It ought to be like that. Sir, no person should have any objection to pay for electricity what he has actually been spending for his old oil lamp. Probably, 5 annas per unit is a bit too high. I do not think there will be any difficulty in reducing it to 4 annas although it will be quite possible to reduce it even further after the Pallivasal Scheme begins to work. Any clamour for further reduction is against principle ; because the rule of taxation is to collect as much as possible from the rich and to distribute it to the poor. It is only the well-to-do man that will afford to live in towns either on business or in Government service ; and it is only the towns that get electricity.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair : May I know whether reduction in the rate would not be an incentive for more people to take electricity so that the income of the department would increase ?

Mr. K. R. Elankath : I can understand my friend's argument if electricity is supplied to rural areas. But as far as towns are concerned, almost all are already consuming electricity at the present rate which they can well afford, and there are only very few who cannot afford it.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair : Will not such people also make use of electricity if the charges are reduced ?

Mr. K. R. Elankath : But the general decrease in the income on account of such reduction will be much more than the increase due to such consumers. That is my point.

As regards the deposit, I should think that it should be insisted upon; because that is the easiest way for realising arrears. It is not wise that even for these small dues we provide for the elaborate and cumbrous processes of the Revenue Recovery Regulation. After all, Sir, it is only a small amount that the consumer has to deposit.

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[Mr. K. R. Elankath.]

I have one suggestion to make. The idea now is to extend the Pallivassl Scheme up to Quilon, so that what we have now to consider is the case of towns and rural areas further south of Quilon. In regard to that, if the municipalities can well afford to have their own installations and generating equipments, Government should sanction such proposals from municipalities; and in other cases Government should advance loans to the municipalities and ask them to supply electricity to the municipal areas.

With these words I support the Demand.

Mr. N. V. Chacko: I would like to thank the Electrical Chief Engineer for his coming forward and undertaking the full responsibility for the mistakes committed in the selection of the site of the first Power House which had to be given up. Generally we find departmental heads shoving of their responsibility in such cases on poor, low-paid subordinates making scape-goats of them. This one act of the Electrical Chief Engineer makes it our duty to forget all his mistakes and to absolve him of all his sins.

In regard to the Pallivasal Hydro Electric Scheme, Sir, I cannot help remarking that we find there almost every mistake from the first discovery of electricity to its present development being rehearsed. If care had been taken, probably all that could have been avoided.

One request that I have to make to the Government is that villages also should be supplied with electricity. There are ever so many rice mills all over the country, and most of them are in the villages. We also require electricity for demestic and irrigation purposes. Of course, people are prepared to pay, so that there cannot be any justification in not supplying electricity to them. It is almost tantalising to find electricity being taken over our head to distant places while we ourselves are denied it. I hope that electricity will be available to the people of Travancore at a very early date and wish that the best use would be made of it and that the rural parts also would be given all its advantages.

Mr. Abdul Tayeb Sheikh Kaderbhoy (*Commerce and Industry, South*): Sir, I also rise to support the Demand. I agree with the suggestions put forward by my friend Mr. Kesavan Nair that the rates should be reduced. If it is not possible to reduce it to 3 annas per unit, I request that it may be reduced at least to 4 annas: and by doing that I am sure there would be more consumers. The Government will be benefited in that way.

In regard to the Pallivasal Scheme I wish to know from the Electrical Engineer at what rate he will be able to supply power to industrial concerns, and whether such rate would be uniform for all industrial concerns or would be different for different industries,

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We want this information in time so that we can make up our minds in the matter.

In regard to Telephone Installation for Quilon, I am glad to find provision for that in the Budget for 1114. I only request the Electrical Engineer to see that the work is done as early as possible.

Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon: Sir, I shall first deal with the supply of power to the Kuttanad area for pumping purposes. The question is already under the consideration of the Department. A preliminary investigation of the area to be served has already been completed. There are about 40,000 acres of Punja lands which can be grouped under 3 classes in accordance with the depth of water to be pumped. The main transmission line is not run direct from Pallam to Alleppey as it was originally proposed, due to certain constructional difficulties. The idea of the department is to construct its own lines or to distribute power through licensees in these 3 different groups of areas in 3 different stages. The first stage will comprise the distribution of power in all the backwater reclamations where at present pumping charges are the highest. The second stage will comprise areas a little towards inland where ordinarily there is 3 to 4 feet of water to be pumped out. Details of these proposals have been completely worked out, and the Electrical Engineer is now in correspondence with the Advocate-General regarding the ways and means... ... ...

President: The honourable member is making the same mistake that I adverted to some time ago; his correspondence with the Advocate-General is not a matter for discussion on the floor of this House.

Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon: I am sorry, Sir. The question how far these lands could be brought under the existing Irrigation Regulation is being considered so that cultivators may be in a position to pay the pumping charges along with land tax. It is hoped that as a result of these investigations a satisfactory solution will be reached whereby substantial savings can be effected in pumping expenses.

Mr. M. K. Ananthasiva Aiyar: My question was whether we will have to go in for fresh machines and I did not get an answer for that. If there is delay we will necessarily have to go in for fresh machines.

Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon: Unfortunately, I am not in a position to guarantee electric supply within a definite period, but it is my hope to commence supply as early as possible

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[Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon]

to avoid the land owners going in for new engines and thus defeating the very object with which the Pallivasal Hydro Electric Scheme has been inaugurated. I hope that such a contingency, *viz.* the necessity to purchase new engines will not arise and every effort will be made to supply power as early as possible at least in regard to those areas where the pumping expenses are the highest at present.

With regard to the Trivandrum Electric Supply about which the honourable member, Mr. Kesavan Nair has raised some points, I shall deal with them seriatim. It is true that the generating cost of energy at Trivandrum is much less than five annas. The actual generating cost is ·596 of an anna. But we have got to consider the cost of distributing that power. The investment on the distribution system is a very heavy item of capital expenditure. In addition to the return on that investment we have got to take into account the distribution losses also and a correct valuation of the power when it reaches a domestic consumer will be in the neighbourhood of 2·86 annas.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair: I believe that includes depreciation charges also?

Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon: Yes. Depreciation charges have to be considered in arriving at the cost of distribution.

Sir, with regard to the rates, it has been stated that the rate in Trivandrum is very high. In this connection I have got to repeat what I said elsewhere that although 5 annas may appear somewhat higher than what prevails elsewhere, it has to be considered that the Trivandrum Electric Supply consumer does not pay any meter rent. The minimum charge for a consumer here is Re. 1 As. 8 per month which is the lowest in South India. The Madras Hydro Electric Department also supplies power to domestic consumers at a minimum charge of Re. 1—8 as. but there they charge in addition a meter rent of 6 annas per month. Thus, actually, the minimum charge at Madras is Re. 1—14 as., whereas here in Trivandrum the minimum is only Re. 1—8 as. The average consumer in Trivandrum pays about Rs. 4 a month and it is very easily seen that there is very little difference between what the consumer pays in Trivandrum and what the consumer pays in Madras. This is in regard to domestic consumers.

I am not dealing with the industrial consumers because we have only a few instances here.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair: May I know whether the member has included in his calculation the electric supply to Government installations also?

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Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon: No, Sir. I am only dealing with domestic consumers. In Government buildings the average consumption is much higher.

With regard to street lighting in Trivandrum, I am sure the honourable member will agree with me that there has been substantial improvement both in the extent of street lighting and in the quality of street lighting. All this has been effected as a result of a satisfactory agreement having been reached with the Municipality and also because of the progressive policy of Government. Last year 317 additional street lights covering nearly 15 miles were provided and this I consider is a very substantial improvement. I am hoping that as a result of further negotiations with the Municipality, the street lighting will be extended further. There are 60 miles of supply lines in Trivandrum and I believe that a major portion of the roads where the supply mains are installed is provided with electric lights.

I quite agree that the service connection charges are a source of complaint to many consumers. But I cannot agree that the average cost of a service connection is so high as stated by one honourable member. I have gone into the figures very closely and I know definitely that Rs. 200 is more an exception than the rule. I am speaking with reference to the bulk of the consumers. The majority of them get their service connection free. It must be conceded, however, that Trivandrum, unlike other towns on the east coast, consists of garden houses and naturally this results in increased investment on service connection charges. Therefore, if some sort of a rule is not insisted on by which service connection has to be paid for, it will increase the capital cost of the whole scheme to such an extent that many of the small consumers who may not generally have to pay for service connection charges will not be in a position to take advantage of the electric supply. It is, however, the hope of the Department that sooner or later, probably sooner than later, it may be able to revise the rules in such a manner as to make it easier for any consumer to pay service connection charges by instalments.

With regard to the testing fee of Rs. 5, I have to mention that such cases as mentioned by the honourable member can be attended to by certified contractors. This fee of Rs. 5 is specially levied with a view to see that the wiring contractors do their work satisfactorily. Otherwise, the Department will be called upon to pay periodical visits to test the installation and certify to the good quality of the work.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair: May I know from the member whether there is any difficulty in insisting on periodical testing?

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Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon: There is no difficulty Sir. The Electricity Regulation does not fix any responsibility on the supply concern for the satisfactory condition of the installation in the premises of a private consumer. It is the duty of the consumer to see that his installation is kept in satisfactory working order. For that purpose, a large number of certified contractors are generally available and wherever the assistance of the Inspectors of the Department is wanted, it is always given and a nominal fee of five rupees is charged. This, I consider is reasonable, because the inspection may take generally some 3 or 4 hours, though in some exceptional cases, it may not take more than half an hour. All the same, we have to make a uniform rule and we cannot show any discrimination in the matter.

With regard to fuseman's fee, I consider, Sir, that that is only a legitimate charge. Ordinarily, the fuse inside the cut-out should not blow unless the installation is defective. If the fuse outside the fuse box goes, the consumer can get it repaired by any contractor without payment to the Department. But if the fuse inside the cut out goes, it shows that the installation is defective and therefore the owner should pay for getting it replaced. Therefore, this fee of Re. 1 is necessary.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair: Could not the man who comes to read the meter be asked to test it also without any additional labour?

Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon: This is not practicable, Sir. There are only five or six meter readers in Trivandrum and they have more than 3,000 meters to attend to and it is therefore not a practicable proposition.

With regard to the deposit of Rs. 10 another honourable member has answered on my behalf. It is all very easy Sir, to say that the Revenue Recovery Regulation can be resorted to for the recovery of amounts due from consumers which generally may range between Rs. 3 to Rs. 4. It is far better for the consumer to deposit Rs. 10 with the Department and avoid all the complications. In the case of owners of properties who are also consumers themselves, the same difficulty arises if the Revenue Rrcovery Regulation is resorted to. Why should a consumer be put to all these expenses if he can avoid all those by depositing with the Department a sum of Rs. 10? Another point about these deposits that was raised was the question of interest. It is not a very precticable proposition to pay interest on these deposits. As matters stand at present, any consumer is at liberty to withdraw his deposit by giving probably a day's notice. Therefore that money should be

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available for repayment at any time. If interest on these deposits is insisted on, one can imagine the time involved in working out the interest in the case of each deposit of Rs. 10.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair: May I know whether these deposits do not come to Rs. 24,000?

Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon: Yes, but it is a sort of circulating money. It is the money which one cannot say belongs to 2,400 consumers only. It belongs by circulation to perhaps 4,000 consumers in the course of the year. One consumer might have ceased to be a consumer and another may have occupied the same premises.

With regard to the enquiry about Mr. Dorofeeff, it is outside the puview of my Department. I do not propose to make any observations.

As regards the deputation of an Assistant Engineer, about which my honourable friend Mr. Kottur Kunjukrishna Pillai mentioned I know definitely, Sir, that a provision was made in the Budget for 1112. It was my intention, Sir, to depute an Assistant Engineer at that time. But what happened subsequently was this. It was at about the same time that we experienced diffculties in Pallivasal. The question of sending a man immediately was therefore not pressing. In the meantime, the activities of the Department expanded considerably, especially with the additional construction work in connection with the Pallivasal Hydro Electric Scheme, and the organization of my department had to be considerably increased due to the creation of the Commercial Engineer' s place. On account of the fact that I had to take up the Commercial Engineer' s work myself, it was found desirable to create a place of another Executive Engineer. Experienced men in the Department were not available and there were very few Travancoreans also available at that time for being taken into the Department. In these circumstances, with a view to save money, I recommended to Government that this deputation need not be given effect to at that time. Moreover, it so happened that one Travancorean Engineering Graduate who had been abroad recently came back after undergoing training in hydro-electric stations in Switzerland and other places and he has been recently recruited by the Public Service Commissioner in a subordinate rank. He is now getting experience in the erection of the machinery at Pallivasal and the idea is to send him to Pykara Generating Station for getting experience in the actual operation of the plant there.

This I consider to be more economical to Government, though the original idea was strongly pressed by me. I do not mind saying that I had to revise my original proposal. With regard to the question of extending the supply of power from the Pallivasal Scheme from Quilon to Trivandrum and further south, I may state

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